

HOSTING VOLUNTEER BUILDERS

If you are one of the many churches or disaster sights who have chosen to use volunteer labor to help you in your building projects. I have compiled the following information to help you and your team. I believe this information will help you to complete the task in a way that will glorify God, as well as enable your congregation to have a pleasant experience. I will begin with the contact process and work through a typical week at the work sight. This will help you to know how it should go. By July, or at the latest 6 months prior to beginning planning, your church should be registered on the NAMB web sight or "On Sight" magazine for construction needs. You can do this by calling the NAMB in Atlanta at 1-800-462-8657 ext. 6445 or 6440. In October or November you should begin the contact process. You need to begin to contact teams and interested teams will contact you. Many volunteers need to make vacation commitments early. The teams will request information on your project. They will inquire about dates, housing, food, sightseeing opportunities, transportation after they arrive and more. I will try to break those areas down to be more specific.

Arrival Dates

The first team in will need the slab in place or a sub floor ready to erect the walls on. You will need to plan according to your local weather situation, in order to insure this is completed for them. If the project is large, an on sight supervisor from NAMB is money well spent. He can help to expedite work and materials for efficient scheduling. This will save you money over the course of the project, and give you better results. A member of the Building Committee or Team should be designated to work on scheduling the arrival of building teams. Be sure not to overlap scheduling teams, as some may need to stay in the homes of church families.

Housing

There are many ways to provide housing; however, my favorite is to stay in church families' homes. The bonds made with new friends are irreplaceable. As you receive the roster of people from each team, request the ages. Try to match up team members with people from your congregation. Remember 60% of the team's time will be building, 30% sleeping and some in between for meeting their host families and bathing. If possible, try to provide beds for the building team. They will be working 10-12 hours per day. If your church is small and cannot accommodate a large team, you may want to ask a sister church to help out. You could try to obtain group housing at a school campus or military base nearby. A local motel may give you group rates. You, as the host church, have this responsibility. Many of the teams will be paying their own way and may want to help with the hotel bill. Having done some of all of the above, in my opinion hotels are the least desirable option.

Food

There are several ways to do food; however, remember to be flexible. Do whatever works to feed the team. It is preferable that the building team arrive on Saturday and have a lunch or supper hosted by the church. Sunday worship will be together, followed by a covered dish dinner hosted by the church. Sunday afternoon team members are on their own. This is an opportune time to get acquainted with their host family. Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday the building team will prepare food for all three meals. This can be done in a kitchen at the existing sight, in the kitchen of a nearby sister church, or using the kitchen facilities of a campground or school where you have access. An additional alternative is to set up a mess tent. In this case you need to run wires and plenty of breakers. You would also need a roaster, electric skillets, griddles, pot, and pans, coffeepots, tables, chairs, and water for washing. This is the hard way. Wednesday is a sightseeing day for the building team. They may want a small breakfast of coffee, sweet rolls, cereal etc. at their host home. Friday will be the same as the other workdays, except for supper. The building team may want to invite the host families to eat supper with them. This could be followed by a dedication service, if desired. Saturday the host family provides breakfast before team members depart.

Sightseeing

As teams contact you, some will want to schedule a day to sightsee. Others will not. Assist them in locating some local attractions that are no more than three hours away. If they have flown in, they will need to use tour buses, church buses and van or rental cars. You, as host families, may want to take them around on Sunday afternoon to see a few things.

Transportation After Arrival

If your team arrives by mass transportation, such as airplane or tour bus, you will need to transport them to the work sight. Church buses, vans or trucks are needed for luggage and tools. If team members stay in homes, the host families will need to transport them to the work sight or lend them a car. If they are in mass housing facilities, you will need to arrange transportation from their lodging to the work sight. If they have driven their own autos, they will transport themselves.

Host Church

Remember: Host as you would like to be hosted. Make your team as comfortable as possible. You may need to erect a tent, obtain extra cooking utensils, and do many other things to meet the challenge. Flexibility is important. The teams will be saving you a lot of money in labor cost. Host church, you will want to have your people participate in the building process, mealtime, prayer and praise time as many as possible. They will find this very rewarding. Make their stay a pleasant one and they will go out again to help yet another Brother and Sister in Christ.

Pastor of Host Church

The teams arriving may desire to have devotions 1-3 times a day, in addition to a dedication service at the end of the workweek. This is a wonderful experience for the team, and more so for your church family. It is a free revival that will inspire them to become involved in missions, as well as to look forward to future teams' arrival. Take advantage of this and encourage your people to become involved.

Other Teams

No two teams work, worship and do things the same way. Our motto is BE FLEXIBLE. You will get something from every team; however, remember they will all be the same, yet different. Each team should have leaders for various responsibilities such as the head cook, sightseeing coordinator, construction boss, and worship leader. Find out who they are and work closely with them. Most teams will bring their own cooks and kitchen crews; however, some may not. That is why flexibility is important.

For more details call William Evans 817-343-5377 or Dena Evans 817-992-1639.

I hope you will find this information useful and that it will make your building projects an even greater success.